

Your Thinking Is Getting In The Way

June 6, 2026

In our text today

The Apostle John wrote: **Revelation 5:1–5**

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Why is John Weeping?

1. John WEPT because he realized that nobody (including himself) could open that scroll,
 - a. and it frustrated him.
 - b. John wept... because he felt helpless.
2. John realized that if **no one** was found who was **worthy**
 - a. then everything was going
 - i. to **remain just as it was**.
 - b. If **nobody** was worthy to open the scroll
 - i. then there would be **no** hope;
 - ii. Evil would **never** be judged;
 - iii. Sin would **never** be fully dealt with;
 - iv. the suffering of God’s people would **never** stop;
 - v. the **chaos** in the world around us would remain;
 - c. and everything in our lives would remain broken.
3. And John **couldn’t** do a thing about it!
 - a. And **neither** can we!
4. HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE JOHN ?
 - a. Trapped – **no** way out of a situation
 - b. **No** solution possible
 - c. Empty
 - d. Hopeless
5. **Reading something like this**
 - a. Reinforces the evidence
 - b. That the Bible is authentic

- c. Records people's
 - i. weaknesses
 - ii. frailties
6. That is what **this passage** makes it clear:
- a. John **wasn't** worthy,
 - b. and **neither** are you or I.
7. We feel the weight of things - we **can't** fix.
- a. Sins we **can't** undo.
 - b. Brokenness we **cannot** restore.
 - c. We long for justice
 - i. we just **can't** make it happen.
 - d. We long for restoration
 - i. but we **can't** get it done.
 - e. And when we **realize that truth**
 - i. that we **can't** fix what's broken –
 - 1. in our lives
 - ii. that's when we can feel - **weak**
 - iii. and **worthless**
 - iv. and **empty**.
8. And when that happens, - we sometimes... WANT TO WEEP.
9. It's **IN THAT MOMENT** that we realize that WE NEED SOMEONE
- a. who is **able to do**
 - b. what we **cannot**.
10. **God put John** in a situation where he felt totally helpless
- a. There was absolutely **nothing**
 - i. within his power
 - ii. He couldn't **fix this problem**
11. **JOHN'S NOT THE ONLY ONE IN THE BIBLE**
- a. **WHO FELT THIS WAY**

2 Corinthians 12:7–10

*“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times **I pleaded** with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my*

weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

12. The **Apostle Paul** understood this way

- a. He was given a **similar revelation** as John
 - i. "surpassingly great revelations"
- b. A picture of the heavenly realm
- c. But these revelations produced a **thorn**
 - i. Have you ever had a thorn in your flesh
 - ii. You can't get it out (even with tweezers)
 - iii. Me with the cactus in Colorado
 - iv. Months to get them out
 - v. Painful

ILLUSTRATION

Several years ago, a magazine published an article about Burt Reynolds. Reynolds recalled the day that both he and Clint Eastwood got fired from Universal Studios. Burt Reynolds said:

"I was told I couldn't act, and Clint was told he walked too slow & his Adam's apple was too big. As we were walking to our cars, we were quiet (but then, it's always quiet around Clint). Finally, I said, 'You're in trouble Clint. I can take acting lessons, but you can't get a new Adam's apple.'"

- 1) That story tells me
- 2) that there are certain things in my life
 - a. that I can control and change.
 - i. If I need a certain skill in my life,
 1. I can get training
 2. or attend a seminar
 3. Seek advice from someone
 4. Read some books on the topic
 5. YouTube it.
 - ii. If my body is need of attention,
 1. I can go on a diet
 2. and exercise.
 - iii. If I'm struggling with a bad habit,
 1. I can get rid of it
 2. and replace with good habits.

- 3) **BUT** there are many other things in our life
 - a. that you and I - **can't** change.
 - b. Certain circumstances that are - beyond our control.
- 4) WE **DON'T GET TO CHOOSE** OUR Challenges **OR** Circumstances:
 - a. Money/Finances
 - b. Health / Cancer
 - c. Employment
 - d. Family issues
- 5) Sometimes we can handle that.
- 6) **BUT when** these circumstances **become wall**
 - a. an obstruction to our lives
 - b. obstacles that we **can't** seem to get
 - i. around,
 - ii. or over,
 - iii. or through....
 1. we can **feel** powerless,
 2. frustrated,
 3. helpless,
 4. vulnerable.

NOTE: *"I don't like feeling that way."*

 - c. In fact, when I encounter situations like that,
 - i. **I can be** a very uncomfortable person
 1. to be around
 - ii. because **I can become**
 1. moody
 2. irritable
 3. even angry
 4. Or I just want to be left alone.
- 7) This "*thorn in the flesh*" that Paul experienced was **NOT** pleasant
- 8) But those times **WILL COME**.
 - a. And when they do come
 - b. how we respond**
 - i. can make all the difference

- ii. in determining what kind of person, **we become**.
- c. Whether we end up becoming
 - i. angry
 - ii. and bitter
- d. **Or** if we become stronger
 - i. and more **Christ-like**
 - ii. **because of** the struggle.

13. **COULD** GOD HAVE REMOVED THE THORN IN PAUL ?

- a. **Yes**, but **He didn't**
- b. It probably stuck with him
 - i. the rest of his life

14. There was a **lesson in that thorn** - God wanted Paul to learn

- a. God works in "*WEAKNESS*"
- b. "*His GRACE is sufficient*"

15. **NOTE:** THE BIBLE IS FULL OF THESE HOPELESS SITUATIONS

- a. Where it seemed,
- b. there was no way out

LET'S JUST LOOK AT A FEW OF THEM:

2 Kings 6:24-29

"Some time later, Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his entire army and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. There was a great famine in the city; the siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a quarter of a cab of seed pods for five shekels. As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, 'Help me, my lord the king!' The king replied, 'If the LORD does not help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress?'" Then he asked her, "What's the matter?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.' So, we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him."

2 Kings 7:1-2

"Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.'" The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" "You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!"

John 5:1-7

"Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—

the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

- a. Jesus told him to pick up his mat and walk – and he did!

Mark 5:24–26

"A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse."

- a. She touched Jesus and was immediately healed

SO MANY OF THESE STORIES

- a) Moses (chased by Pharaoh) crossing the Red Sea
- b) Gideon **taking on** thousands of Midianites with only 300 men
- c) David, a shepherd boy, **taking on** a military trained giant of a soldier
- d) Disciples in a boat during a vicious, life-threatening storm while Jesus was asleep
- e) MANY, MANY MORE

BACK TO JOHN

16. And it was at that moment that **one of the Elders** spoke to John

- a. and said: "*DO NOT WEEP!*"
- b. It's almost **like the Elder was saying**
 - i. "*It's alright*"
 - ii. **NOT** because the problem **WASN'T REAL**
 - iii. **but** because - there was an answer.
- c. John was about to learn a very important lesson

17. The Elder says:

- a. "*See the Lion of the tribe of Judah,*
- b. *the Root of David, has triumphed.*
- c. *He is able to open the scroll and the seven seals."*

18. And John turns expecting to see a ... **mighty lion**.

- a. But that's **not** what he saw.
- b. John wrote **Revelation 5:6**: "*I SAW A LAMB standing, as though it had been slain*"
 - i. **Not** what he expected
 - ii. Appears to be weakness

1. A bloodied Lamb
 2. Slain
- c. And **when** John **saw** the Lamb of God that **looked like** it had been **slain**:
- i. ALL OF HEAVEN BROKE OUT IN PRAISE!
 - ii. *“They sang a new song saying “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”* **Revelation 5:9-10**

19. God knew what He was doing

- a. John **didn't**
- b. But God **did**
- c. God has a plan
 - i. that we don't always readily see
- d. **We see WEAKNESS**
- e. **GOD SEES**
 - i. Strength
 - ii. Possibilities
 - iii. Deliverance

ILLUSTRATION

- a. Too often we **don't** rely on His strength,
- b. because we think
 - a. we're strong enough
 - b. on our own.

Kyle Idelman tells a story of the time his 4-year-old daughter came into his office, just as he rearranging the furniture. He had this large heavy desk and was pushing it from one side of the office to the other.

His daughter wanted to help so she got between his arms and just started pushing with all her might. She huffed and puffed, strained and struggled with her dad behind her.

At one point she stopped, looked at her dad and said, “Daddy, you are in my way, just stand over there.”

Kyle hid his smile and did as she said. Again, she huffed and puffed, struggled and strained but this time the desk didn't budge an inch. Daddy wasn't behind her pushing any longer.

- a) **That's what** too many Christians **end up doing** with God.
- b) And that points to **another reason why**

- a. we need to understand
 - i. the truth that
 - ii. **we** are weak
 - iii. and **He** is strong.

- c) You see - **until we realize** God is strong and we are weak
 - a. We will **tend to live** our Christianity **backwards**.
 - b. We will **tend** to **live as if** *God needs us*
 - i. **not** the other way around.
 - c. We tend to believe **God needs**
 - i. OUR time,
 - ii. talent,
 - iii. treasures,
 - iv. **in order to accomplish what He wants**.
 - d. We **tend** to **believe** God depends on us
 - i. **far more than** we depend upon Him,
 - 1. because He just **couldn't** accomplish
 - 2. what He wants
 - 3. without us.

d) John the Baptist told the **most religious people** of his day:

Matthew 3:8–9

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

- a. God **doesn't** need us
- b. But **He wants** to use us
 - i. **IF** we make ourselves available to Him
 - ii. And **stop trying** to force a square peg through a round hole
 - iii. Relying on our own
 - 1. Reasoning
 - 2. Understanding
 - 3. Talents
 - 4. Abilities

1 Corinthians 1:18–25

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”*

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.”

ILLUSTRATION

Someone once said: “God will find a way, but God can’t find a way - IF you’re in the way.”

Revelation 5:11–13

“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

*“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”*

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

*“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”*

20. All the Heavenly Hosts praised the Lamb

- a. **NOT** ONLY because
 - i. He was worthy
 - ii. to open the scroll,
- b. **but also**, because
 - i. HE had ransomed THEM
 - ii. for God,
- c. And because He made THEM to be:
 - i. a Kingdom
 - ii. and Priests
 - iii. for our God.

- d. In essence, Jesus can change our lives
 - i. in powerful ways because
 - 1. He was the Lamb
 - 2. who'd been slain,
 - 3. and died for us.

CONCLUSION

21. So are **you tired of trying** to make your life work

- a. **Feeling like** you have to
 - i. get Your life together
- b. Worrying about all the problems
 - i. you are faced with
- c. Or worrying about other people
 - i. and **their** problems

22. **You just need to REMEMBER**

- 1) Jesus is on the throne
- 2) He IS - **more than capable**
 - i. of dealing with all the things
 - ii. in your life
- 3) But that **doesn't** mean that
 - i. He is going to **simplify your life**
- 4) In fact, He may be **allowing** you
 - i. to struggle on purpose
- 5) **To break you** of your
 - i. self-reliance
 - ii. and pride

23. JESUS JUST MAKES THIS SIMPLE PLEA:

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- 1) *“Rest for our souls”*
 - a. To calm our souls

- 2) **Isn't** that what we **all really want**
 - a. To have a sense of inner peace
- 3) That is what
 - a. the LAMB that was slain
 - b. has to **offer us**
- 4) Because **He is the only one**
 - a. who is worthy
 - b. to bring us that peace